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OLC 71-0263

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21 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: White House Meeting of Legislative Interdepartmental Group

1. This afternoon I attended the first meeting of the Legislative Interdepartmental Group in the Situation Room at the White House. The meeting was chaired by General Haig and included the following: Ken BeLieu, John Lehman, and Dick Cook of the White House staff; Stuart French, General James Lawrence, and Colonel Ricardo Alvarado of the Department of Defense; Harrison Symmes of Department of State; and Bill Rehnquist and Bob Wild of Justice Department.

2. Items of general interest to the Agency included the following:

a. During discussion of a GAO request to the State Department for national policy papers on the Philippines, Lehman asked about the status of the "Staats' letter to Helms." Referring to the GAO request for information on chemical warfare programs, I said Jack Maury told GAO we could not provide the papers they requested, but we would be happy to sit down and discuss the matter with them. I added that GAO has not been back in touch with us. (On returning to the office I learned the Director had sent notes to Kissinger and Laird about a subsequent request from Staats having to do with net estimates on U.S. and Soviet military research and development programs. I called Lehman and told him I would look into this further and be back in touch with him.)

On the subject of the request for the policy papers, Symmes took the position that State should show the papers to GAO but preclude their taking notes on certain aspects of them. French said this was unworkable and recommended that nothing be shown GAO. Hague was interested in avoiding a confrontation and favored a selective release to GAO of sanitized copies of papers or a briefing on their content.

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b. Haig asked about the Director's concern with Symington's letter of 9 March indicating that his Foreign Relations Subcommittee would be looking into intelligence duplication overseas. I said we were still concerned about this, but after discussions with State and DOD our response merely designated Jack Maury as our liaison contact since we felt this response was not the place to join the issue on Subcommittee jurisdiction. Haig advised the group that any issue with the Symington Subcommittee should come before LIG for resolution.

c. Haig asked for a report on the RFE legislation to which Symmes responded. I pointed out that the funding issue would probably be the biggest problem on this and I reported the positions of Mahon and Ellender regarding funding in the CIA budget. I also mentioned the "continuing resolution approach" to funding, but said I thought the new Case/Reid bills could be acted on in the Congress in relatively short order if sufficient pressure was applied.

d. I asked Lehman and Haig about the status of White House action on the Koch letter (I understand that Otis Pike is sending out similar ones). Lehman promised to look into it.

3. Other topics covered included:

a. Strategy for the Handling of the ABM Issue. DOD representatives said the Secretary of Defense has scheduled meetings with congressional leadership on this and State has a briefing arranged which will be given Members at various breakfast meetings. BeLieu noted in passing that Senator Symington will chair the Military Construction Subcommittee this year and in that capacity will be in a position to make policy through Subcommittee decisions on authorizations for construction.

b. War Powers and End the War Resolutions. Symmes reported Secretary Rogers is scheduled to testify on the war powers resolutions before the Foreign Relations Committee on 14 May. This prompted a discussion of witnesses to testify on the McGovern/Hatfield resolution to end the war. Alexis Johnson and Admiral Moorer were mentioned as the most likely candidates.

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c. Proxmire's Requests for Five Year Planning Figures and Country Projections. No real progress seems to have been made on these, particularly in view of Proxmire's refusal to accept anything classified.

d. Foreign Relations Committee Staff Clearances. DOD representatives said that Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs Richard Capen had refused to permit the granting of additional security clearances for certain Foreign Relations Committee clerical personnel who were in close proximity to classified material, but they hope to have this reconsidered when Rady Johnson replaces Capen.

e. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Pakistan Hearings. General Haig expressed relief that Joseph Sisco's scheduled appearance before the Committee tomorrow had been postponed. Haig said it was not at all clear that Sisco was in concert with or aware of the President's views on the situation there.

4. General Haig said the next few meetings would probably be held at weekly intervals until a number of outstanding issues are resolved. He stressed, however, that members should let him know if the meetings become burdensome.

Deputy Legislative Counsel

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